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THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

PART III.

BY ORSON PRATT,

ONE OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS.

THREE important subjects relative to the kingdom of God have been already investigated in PARTS I AND II. We shall now proceed to the examination of the

Fourth,—namely, *The nature and character of the laws given for the government of all adopted citizens.*

After having complied with the rules of adoption, mankind are considered the legal citizens of God's kingdom; and as such, they are required to obey strictly all the laws, ordinances, statutes, commands, counsels, and words of the Great King; and in all things show themselves the faithful, honest, and loyal subjects of his government. That the citizens of the kingdom may be able to render strict obedience to its laws, they should make themselves thoroughly acquainted with them, and thus obey understandingly. Persons ignorant of the laws of the kingdom are liable to be deceived. They may suppose themselves obeying the law, when, in fact, they are only complying with some vain and foolish tradition of men. They are in constant danger of transgressing laws of which they are ignorant, and of neglecting to observe others that are of importance.

Millions of modern christians say they take the Bible as their "rule of faith and practice,"—that the Bible is their law. But we ask, what part of the Bible is the law of God unto man in this age? Is the history of the creation a law unto any one? Is the history of the building of the ark, or of the tower of Babel, or of Solomon's temple, a law or "rule of faith and practice" for the Saints now? Is the history of Abraham's travels—of the doings of Moses and Aaron—of Israel's wanderings in the wilderness—of the wars of Israel under the reign of their judges and kings—a law unto succeeding generations? Is the history of Jesus and the apostles a law binding upon the Saints of latter days? Must we be baptized in *Jordan* because John baptized there? Must we ride upon an ass-colt into Jerusalem because Jesus did? Must we scourge the people out of the Jewish temple because Jesus thought it necessary to do so? Must we build up churches in Rome, in Corinth, in Galatia, or in any other place, because the New Testament gives the history of such events? Is the history of any of the events recorded in either the Old or the New Testaments a law unto any man now living? No, it is not. The historical parts of the Bible, then, are not intended to govern the actions of modern christians.

Let us now inquire if all the laws, ordinances, and commands in the Bible are intended as our rule of faith and practice—as a law now binding upon us? God commanded Adam that he should not eat of the tree in the midst of the garden of Eden. Is this a law unto modern christians? No. God commanded Noah that he should build an ark of certain dimensions, and of a certain kind of wood: that he should take into the ark a certain number of beasts and fowls. Are these commands binding upon christians now? Surely not. God commanded Abraham to leave the land of Chaldaea and go into a land wherein he was a stranger. Must modern christians obey this command? Abraham was commanded to offer up his son Isaac. Is this a law of God's kingdom now? God commanded the Israelites to leave Egypt—to walk through the Red Sea—to pitch their tents in a certain way—to travel in a certain order—to build a tabernacle after a certain pattern which he gave them—to offer various animals and fowls as sacrifices. Are these commands, laws, or ordinances the Saints' "rule of faith and practice" in these days? They are not. God commanded the tribes of Israel to slay both men, women, and children—old and young. Must the Saints in all ages be governed by that command? No. God commanded Israel

to encompass the walls of Jericho a certain number of times, blowing upon ram's horns. Is this a law or command to be observed now? Verily, no. Jesus commanded Peter to go and catch a fish in order to pay taxes. Is this command in force yet? Jesus commanded the apostles to tarry in Jerusalem a certain time, until they were qualified to preach. Must all other Saints wait in Jerusalem for a like qualification? An angel of the Lord commanded Philip to go into the south country; another angel commanded Cornelius to send for Peter; an angel commanded Joseph, the husband of Mary, to flee into Egypt, and, after tarrying there a certain time, an angel commanded him to return again to the land of Israel. Will any one pretend to say that any of these commands are to be observed now? There are many thousands of laws, commands, ordinances, and sayings, like the foregoing, both in the Old and New Testaments, that modern Saints cannot obey; indeed, it would be the height of delusion, and a great sin, to undertake to obey them *now*. Could any man remain guiltless and kill little infant children now, because such a command was given to Israel? No, he could not. The most of the commands and ordinances of the Bible were limited in their application, and were never intended to be binding upon future generations. Many were limited to single individuals, and they only were required to obey them; and when once obeyed, they were no longer binding upon those individuals nor any one else. Other laws in the Bible were given to govern all Israel for many generations; yet these also were limited to Israel, and were never intended to govern Gentile Christians. Most of the commands and laws in the Bible were given according to circumstances: as the circumstances were constantly changing, so the commands and laws were constantly changing to suit circumstances.

The moral law, however, never changes: it remains the same throughout all dispensations and ages. The Lord commanded Israel, saying, "Thou shalt not kill—thou shalt not steal—thou shalt not commit adultery," &c. These laws, with many others, never were intended to be done away, but wherever the kingdom of God is established, these laws exist in full force as rules of faith and practice. Many of the laws of Moses and the prophets, and of Jesus and the apostles, were moral in their nature, and never were intended to cease. The moral law, or law of righteousness, has been revealed anew in different generations and to numerous individuals. Once revealing this law did not seem sufficient, hence it was revealed afresh, and over and over again, in successive generations. Each inspired writer received *new revelations* upon this great unchangeable law; and, in addition to this, each in his turn revealed thousands of commands, laws, and ordinances suited to the conditions and circumstances of the people, which never were binding upon any but the individuals who received them, and to whom they were given.

Connected with the moral law, or the law which is intended to regulate the moral actions of men, there are certain ordinances which are intended as standing ordinances in the kingdom, such, for example, as the sacrament of the Lord's supper—the laying on of hands in the name of the Lord for the healing of the sick—and the anointing with oil for the same purpose. It might appear to some as superfluous for the Lord to reveal through successive prophets and inspired men the same things which he had previously revealed to former ages; but when we reflect upon the importance of being governed by righteous laws, and upon the frailty of man and his liability to forget God and his laws, we need not be surprised at this. It is certain that inspired men, in *different* ages, have revealed the same things anew, and have illustrated them in a great variety of ways, so as to impress the importance of them on the minds of men; as for example, how often mankind have been commanded through inspired men to worship no other god but the true and living God! How often have they been commanded through inspired men to keep the Sabbath day holy? Many of the laws given to Moses were often repeated again in the inspired writings of future prophets. Modern Christians suppose that the Bible contains sufficient revelation to save man. They argue "that the law of righteousness is clearly revealed in that book, and that more revelation would be superfluous." If," say they, "the Bible contains the gospel, why should another revelation of the gospel be given?" It is said, "if another gospel be revealed it must be false; if the same gospel be revealed it is useless, for we already have it in ancient revelations." They further argue, "that if mankind in ancient days could be saved by what was revealed to them, the same revelations will save man-

kind in these days," hence they suppose there is no need of any more. This objection urged by modern divines against new revelation being given in these days, might have been urged with the same propriety five thousand years ago; as, for examples, the antediluvian world might have used this argument against Noah's new revelations. They might have said that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, had sufficient revelation to save not only his spirit but his body also; and that Enoch knew of Christ, and prophesied that he "should come with ten thousand of his saints to execute judgment," &c.; and that if, through the vast number of revelations he had received, he could be translated, body and spirit, into the abodes of immortality, why not we be saved by the same revelations without any new ones? Why, they might have said, do you, Noah, pretend to give new revelations, when your great grandfather Enoch had revelations enough to translate him? Cannot we be saved, as well as he, if we take Enoch's revelations as our "rule of faith and practice?" But, says the new-revelation-deniers of modern times, "Enoch's revelation said nothing about the flood and the ark; it was therefore necessary that more revelation should be given to warn the people of these events." Very well. May there not also be some judgments to escape, and important events to happen in our age, of which the ancient prophets have said nothing? And will not new revelation be equally as necessary to make known these unknown events that may happen in our day, as it was in Noah's day? After Matthew had been inspired to write the gospel, why was it necessary that Mark, Luke, and John should be inspired to write the same gospel? According to the arguments of the false teachers of modern times, if the last three evangelists revealed a different gospel from Matthew, it would be false, and if they revealed the same it would be useless, there being no necessity for the same thing to be revealed over again. If the revelation of the gospel by Matthew were sufficient to save men, why, according to their logic, should any further revelation be given? Why should Mark, Luke, John, Paul, Peter, James, and Jude give new revelation, after Matthew had given sufficient to save himself and others? But, says the false teacher, it was necessary, that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word should be established, and once being established, there was no further need of revelation. In reply, we say, if *two or three* witnesses were sufficient, why did he give *eight* writers instead of two or three? We see no more impropriety in sending *eight hundred* inspired men, or *eight thousand* to write more revelation, than in sending *eight*.

Besides these eight inspired writers of the first century, vast numbers of others received revelations during that period, such as the prophet Agabus, the four daughters of Philip, and the numerous prophets among the Corinthians and other churches. Surely the Lord was not very particular to confine the spirit of revelation to *two or three* witnesses; neither was he very careful not to have the same things incorporated in the revelations of different men.

The inspired writings of the first century, though given at different times, and through different men, reveal the same gospel, teach the same law of righteousness, and declare the same ordinances; yet no one pretends to deny the usefulness of either or any of these inspired writings, because the same gospel, law, and ordinances had previously been revealed in some other writing. Each of these inspired writings are considered valuable, because they contain, not a different gospel or law, but different items of revelation which were once adapted to the different circumstances of individuals and churches to whom they were given. These ever varying items of revelation are valuable, not as a law or rule for the church in these days, but as matters of history. The revelation to Saul of Tarsus to "*arise and go into Damascus*"—the revelation to Ananias to "*arise and go into the street that is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul*"—the revelation to the prophets in the church at Antioch to "*set apart Barnabas and Saul to the work of the ministry*"—the revelation to Saul to "*make haste, and get quickly out of Jerusalem,*" for the Jews would not receive his testimony, and numerous other like revelations, are valuable as matters of history only; for no one will have the absurdity to say that such revelations are binding upon any one else excepting the persons that received them. The history of God's revelations, ever varying to suit circumstances, is an encouragement for the Saints in the nineteenth century to seek after new revelations, like the ancients, which shall be adapted to the ever-varying and innumerable circumstances

with which they may be surrounded. It will do no good to read the history of the angel sending Philip into the south country to preach, unless ministers can be sent by revelation in these days into the right country or field of labour. It will be of no advantage to read the history of the revelations given through the prophets of Antioch, relating to the calling and ministry of Paul and Barnabas, unless there are prophets and revelations in these days to call men to the ministry in the same way. The history of other men's revelations, callings, and missions, would be of no more advantage to us than the history of a good dinner would be to a hungry man, or the history of the miraculous deliverance of the three Hebrew children from the fiery furnace would be to a man perishing in the flames. Callings and missions in the nineteenth century require new revelations as much as in the first century. The history of others' callings, missions, and duties, under certain circumstances, gives no knowledge of our callings, missions, and duties under different circumstances. As well might we say to a hungry man that he has no need to eat in these days, as to say to the Saints they have no need of new revelation in these days. If a hungry man be told to read the history of the loaves and fishes on which others feasted, and be satisfied therewith, his appetite would be greatly increased, and he would desire to eat for himself; so if the Saint who is hungering and thirsting after righteousness be told to read the history of the innumerable revelations given to the ancient Saints, varied to suit their circumstances, and be satisfied therewith, it will greatly increase his desire to receive revelation for himself suited to his own circumstances.

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by *every word of God*." This cannot mean every word which God has spoken in different ages; for it would be impossible to live by all the words of God spoken to Noah—to Abraham—to Moses—to the prophets and to the apostles. Thousands of words which God has given could be obeyed only by the very individuals to whom they were given. No other person could obey them. Man is to live by every word of God contained in those general laws which are given for the government of his kingdom in all ages; and he is also to live by every word which shall be given to him as an individual. In the latter case his circumstances may be such as to require vast numbers of new revelations suited to his condition. These revelations, no doubt, would greatly differ from any that were ever before given to man, or from any that would ever afterwards be given. No two individuals, churches, nations, or generations, are in the same condition; not even one individual is in the same circumstances in any two successive periods of his life. Consequently there is no period, nor year, nor generation, nor age wherein new revelations are not needed among the people of God. The nature and character of the laws given for the government of adopted citizens, then, are not only those which are binding on man in every age, but those new revelations which are given directly to the citizens from year to year during their own lives. When new revelations or laws are given for the benefit of a church or people, they are generally communicated through the prophets or other inspired officers of the church. When they are given to suit the circumstances of an individual, they are sometimes communicated through an inspired officer, as in the cases of Samuel's revelation to Saul—of Nathan's to David, and numerous other instances that might be named; and sometimes they are given directly to the individual himself, as in the case of the revelation to Cornelius, to Philip, to the shepherds, to the wise men of the east, to Anna, to Simeon, and to great numbers of others mentioned in sacred history.

It may be thought by some that a doctrine of continued revelation is a dangerous doctrine, calculated to deceive and mislead weak-minded persons to believe in anything, and every thing pretending to be revelations. But let such persons reflect that God is the author of such doctrine; and it is not at all likely that he would establish continued revelation among his people if it were a dangerous doctrine. Can the wisest of our readers point out a people of God in any age of the world to whom he did not give continued revelations? Has God ever acknowledged any people or church as his own that did not receive new revelations for their own benefit? The danger, then, is all on the other side. The man who does not believe in *continued revelation* among the people of God, is already deceived and has not the religion of the Bible. By rejecting new revelation, he rejects one of the great fundamental principles by which the people of God in all ages are clearly distinguished from every other people. But the reader may ask, is there not danger of being deceived by false revelation? We reply, yes;

but shall we reject the true coin, because there is danger of being deceived with the spurious? Shall we reject all vegetable food because some vegetables are poisonous? Shall we reject the gift of the Holy Spirit, because there are many false spirits abroad among men? Shall we reject the doctrine of salvation through Christ, because there have been many false christ? Shall we reject new revelations from God, because there have been many false ones?

Every faithful upright person in the church or kingdom of God enjoys the gift of the Holy Ghost, which is a sure preventative against all deception. The Holy Spirit, knows all things, and never deceives any one. Jesus said (see John xiv, xv, and xvi, chapters), "The comforter which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, *he shall teach you all things*, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." "Howbeit, when he the Spirit of truth is come, *he will guide you into all truth*: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and *he will shew you things to come*. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine; therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and *shall shew it unto you*." Perhaps some may suppose that this comforter which is called the Holy Ghost, was only to be given to the apostles; but Peter said to thousands on the day of Pentecost, that if they would repent and be baptized for the remission of sins, they should "*receive the gift of the Holy Ghost*;" and then to shew them that the promise of this gift was not limited to a few thousand persons, he says, in the next sentence, "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." This passage evidently proves that the promise of the Holy Ghost, was a promise universal in its extent, embracing all mankind who would comply with the conditions of repentance and baptism. If, then, all mankind can receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, where is the danger of their being deceived by false revelations? No where, if they are faithful enough to retain the Spirit. "*He shall teach you all things*." "*He shall guide you into all truth*." Oh! how easy it is with this Spirit to detect false revelations, and to be guided into the truth of all new ones! The Spirit knows its own revelations and can testify of them. Hence, says John, in one of his epistles directed to the saints generally, "The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and *ye need not that any man teach you*; but as *the same anointing teacheth you of all things*, and is truth, and is no lie; and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." (1 John, ii. chap.) This "anointing" evidently means the promised Spirit which all the churches of the saints enjoyed. All the saints were taught by this Spirit in all things. By this Spirit they could detect false apostles, false prophets, false teachers, false spirits, false doctrines, and false revelations without the least difficulty.

Paul said, that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. *But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God*. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God? *that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God*." "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: *neither can he know them*, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things." (1 Cor. ii. chap.) Thus we perceive that the "*natural man cannot know the things of the Spirit*;" therefore he is liable to be deceived, and to embrace false revelations, and believe a lie and be damned, because without the Spirit he is unable to judge whether a revelation is from God or from some other source. Not so with the spiritual man; he *judgeth all things*, and decides by the spirit between error and truth. Neither the eye, the ear, nor the heart of a natural man has perceived the things in reserve for the righteous; but the spiritual man has a knowledge of them by revelation. "*God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit*." The Saints find out "*the deep things of God*" by the Spirit. The faithful Saints or the elect cannot be deceived; for the Holy Ghost dwells in them as a spirit of constant revelation, teaching them all things; guiding them into all truth; shewing them things to come; taking of the things of the Father and shewing the same unto them by heavenly visions and dreams, and revealing the deep things of God such as no natural man could ever see, hear, think of, or know, for they are only

spiritually discerned. Thus there is no possibility of a person's ever being deceived who follows the teachings and revelations of the Holy Ghost.

The revelations given by the Holy Ghost; by the voice of the Lord; by the ministry of angels; by visions and dreams, and by the inspired officers of the kingdom, are the kind of laws ordained for the government of the Saints. By such laws they have been governed in every age and dispensation. All churches who have not faith to obtain revelations and laws by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, are not the churches of God. Though they may pretend to great piety; profess to be christians; make long prayers; preach eloquent sermons; and meet together every Sabbath day under the pretence of worshipping God, yet if they have not faith to obtain new revelations, and visions, and the ministry of angels, they are not the church of God, and are deceiving themselves and others with a false and delusive religion; a religion by which they will perish, as the scripture saith, "*Where there is no vision the people perish.*" (Proverbs, xxix. 18.)

In all human governments there is a necessity for new laws to be given, and sometimes in great abundance. No one will be so wild as to say that the laws given one thousand years ago to England, to France, and to the various nations of the earth, have been strictly applicable to the infinite variety of circumstances in which they have since been placed. Every one knows that all governments would soon fall into the most inextricable confusion should new laws cease to be given only for the short period of fifty years. Every town, city, and district, of any extent, pay out their thousands annually for the support of a law-making department. If new circumstances in all human governments are constantly calling for new laws, why not new circumstances in God's government also require new laws? It may, perhaps, be argued that human laws are imperfect, and therefore new ones are given; but that God's laws being perfect, no new ones are necessary. In reply to this, we observe that in human governments new laws are not generally given because of the imperfections of the old ones, but because new conditions require it. New laws are not often given *instead* of the old ones, but in *addition* to them; both old and new remaining in full force. The want of new laws would be equally as necessary though human laws were ever so perfect. So in the kingdom of God, the perfection of the old laws does not in the least obviate the necessity of new ones as new circumstances arise.

In all human governments every law is made by the legal law-making department, or else it is of no force, and the people are not bound by it. So in the kingdom of God, all laws must come from the Great Law-giver, or else they are of no force, and the people are under no obligations to obey them. If any body of unauthorized men on this island, were to write out a code of laws for the government of the kingdom of Great Britain, who would be so lost to all reason and common sense as to suppose such laws were legal and valid? Yet there are millions who consider themselves under obligations to believe and obey the uninspired writings in the "*Thirty-nine Articles*" of the Church of England, and in the various creeds, catechisms, confessions of faith, and disciplines of other sects, as though they had actually come afresh from God. The vast variety of creeds and articles of faith now in the world, shews clearly that mankind consider that they have need of more rules and laws besides those given in ancient days. The necessity of more has appeared so obvious, that they have concluded to have more at all hazards. To obtain more, from the Great King, they suppose is entirely out of the question. The only way, in their estimation, is to usurp the place of God, and give laws to the people as he anciently did. To obtain laws from the legal Law-giver in these days, they assert is the highest blasphemy, but to usurp authority and give laws and articles of faith in God's stead, they consider is all right. The archbishops, bishops, and whole clergy of the Church of England, with the king at their head, thinking that the Lord had given all the rules, laws, and articles of faith in the Bible which he ever intended to give, and seeing the great necessity there was for more, concluded that wherein the Lord failed in supplying the present wants of their church they would make it up out of the superabundance of their own wisdom. The first rich display of their fruitful imaginations was to invent an entire new kind of god, which no former generation ever thought of. A description of this god they have given in their first article of Religion: he is there represented to be "*without body, parts, or passions.*" Such is the first effort of this great body of

learned divines in helping the Lord make articles of faith. When the Lord made articles of religion in old times, he had not the assistance of such learned men; perhaps that may be the reason that this *bodiless, passionless* god of modern times was not then discovered! Oh! what darkness the world would have been in relative to this god without "*parts*," if these modern divines had suffered the God of Israel to give articles of religion as he did in ancient days! Had it not been for this learned body, the world never would have known that the whole of anything could exist without "*parts*!"—they never would have known the difference between this newly invented god and the God of Israel, who said to Moses, "*thou shalt see my back PARTS.*" Exodus xxxii. 23. Let the Church of England hush all their fears, for their god can neither see, hear, nor speak; they never need be afraid that he will give them new revelations, or laws, or articles of religion, or interfere in any way with their church matters. The God of Israel makes his own laws and articles of religion for his own church in all ages; but this modern god, having no tongue, nor mouth, nor any other "*parts*," has left this work entirely to his Right Reverend Worshipers.

Fifth.—*The character, disposition, and qualifications necessary for every citizen to possess.*

After being adopted into the kingdom of God it is necessary that every citizen should cultivate such a character and disposition as shall be most pleasing to their King. Whenever the King shall give them advice or counsel upon any subject, they should, without any hesitation, adhere strictly to that advice or counsel. It is a great thing to find out the will of God, but it is still greater to do it. God requires the most perfect obedience on the part of his subjects. We may not always discern the end or result of doing as we are commanded; but this is no excuse for disobedience. Abraham did not know the useful result the Lord had in view in commanding him to offer up his son Isaac; if he had followed the dictates of his own natural feelings or affections, he never would have attempted to comply with this command; it was enough for him to understand that God required such a sacrifice, without waiting to be informed of the reason why he required it. This should be the disposition and character of every child of God, to go with all his heart, and do whatever the Lord requires, though he may be utterly in the dark as to the purpose which God may wish to accomplish by giving such commandment. Does a skilful general reveal to all his soldiers all his purposes and designs in regard to the enemy? No, he only reveals unto them what he wishes them to do, while the result of their obedience is oftentimes entirely hidden from their view. If soldiers were never to obey until they understood the useful results to be accomplished, they would not be very loyal to their officers. How many there are among mankind that would be delighted to obtain a revelation of God's will concerning themselves, if they could be persuaded that he would not reveal any thing contrary to their wishes. They would be very sorry to get a revelation "*to sell all that they had and give to the poor*," as Jesus told the young man in ancient days. They would not like to hear "*a voice from heaven*" commanding them to come out of Babylon, or to leave their native land, their fine farms and splendid mansions, and go into a strange country as Abraham did: they would prefer to receive no revelations at all, rather than be directed to make such sacrifices. But not so with good faithful citizens of the kingdom of God: they wish to be guided by new revelation day by day, and year by year: they delight to do every thing that the Lord reveals to them, believing that it will be for their future happiness and well-being.

It is not every one that crieth Lord, Lord, that shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but it is he that doeth the will of the Father. Justification, sanctification, purification, and glorification, are all obtained through the atonement of Jesus Christ by doing the will of the Father, as made manifest by the revelation of his word. Jesus prays to the Father thus,—"*Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.*" Reader, do you desire to be justified from all your sins? if so, obey the law of justification as revealed from heaven, and your sins shall all be blotted out. Do you desire to be sanctified and purified from all unrighteous and unholy desires? if so, seek to obtain the word of the Lord by new revelation, and after you have obtained it, either directly to yourself, or through others, be sure and obey it, and you shall be made pure and clean; but remember that after the word of the Lord has come unto

you and his will is revealed, and you refuse to obey, your situation will be much worse than those to whom the Lord has never spoken. "He that *knoweth* his master's will," through the medium of new revelation, "and doeth it not, the same shall be beaten with many stripes; but he that knoweth it not," that is, has never been favoured with a message or revelation from his master, and doeth things worthy of stripes, shall only be beaten with few stripes."

When the children of the kingdom pray, let them be careful not to use vain repetitions as the Church of England do in their "*Litany*," for they repeat the same thing over again on every Sunday, Wednesday, and Friday: the same things are asked for some fifty or sixty times on each of these days; so that in fifty years each member of that church repeats the same petition something like four hundred thousand times. The faithful Saints will avoid all such wicked mockery, for it is very displeasing to the true God to have such "*vain repetitions*" constantly sounding in his ears year after year. Where is there a sensible man in all the world that would not be disgusted with his own children, or with any other persons, who should constantly annoy him by asking for the same thing fifty times a day, for three days every week, and follow it up year after year? Such persons would be counted as insane, or unfit for the society of rational beings. How much more, then, will the true God be disgusted, and abhor such nonsense? Any being, except a *bodiless, passionless nonentity*, would treat such worshippers with contempt, and consider them a nuisance in all civilized society.

When the Saints pray, they should endeavour to find out what they want most, and then calmly, simply, and honestly ask for it, with an expectation of receiving it; for, says our Saviour, "If my words abide in you, and ye abide in me, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be given unto you." Do not think that you will be heard for much speaking, or for vain repetitions. If you fail in receiving any thing that would be for your benefit, or any thing that is promised, you may know that there is some cause for it: perhaps you may not have been as faithful as you ought; the fault, if any, must be in yourself; for God's promises are sure. Therefore seek to find out the reason why your prayer is not answered, and remove the cause, and then ask again, and if all is right on your part, you will receive an answer. Seek not to express your desires before the Lord in great swelling words, to be praised of men for your eloquence, neither convert your voice into some unnatural tone; but endeavour to speak to the Lord with the same degree of sincerity and confidence that a child has in asking its parents for food. When you desire any particular blessing, do not let your mind be wandering upon hundreds of other blessings which are foreign from the one which you more earnestly desire, lest your faith become divided, and you fail of receiving any answer. If a great multitude of things are asked for in the same prayer, the Saints are sometimes apt afterwards to forget some things which they have prayed for, and consequently do not look with earnest expectation for the answer, and because of this the blessing is withheld.

The great secret in obtaining favors from God, is to form, modify, and cultivate such characters and dispositions as will correspond in every respect with the teachings of the word and spirit of Christ. Condescend to men of low estate. Despise not the poor because of his poverty; and when you prepare a feast, invite in "*the poor, the halt, the maimed, and blind*"; for they cannot recompense you again in this life, but you shall receive your recompense at the resurrection of the just.¹⁵ Feed the hungry—clothe the naked—administer to the widow and the fatherless in their afflictions—visit the sick. Let your love abound unto all men: endeavour to reclaim men from the error of their ways by telling them the plain unvarnished truth in meekness and with sobriety, remembering that you yourselves were once in gross darkness, because of the traditions and false religions with which you were surrounded; therefore have compassion upon the millions of deluded beings who have deceived themselves with the pomp and vain show of modern christianity. Be upright and honest before all men. Practice virtue and holiness continually. Such should be the disposition and character of all the children of God, in order to qualify themselves for usefulness in this world, and to inherit eternal life in the world to come.

15, Wilton Street, Liverpool, Jan. 14th, 1849.